

Durham County Council

At a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 20 October 2017** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor P Brookes in the Chair

Panel Members:

Councillors H Bennett, J Carr, J Charlton, J Considine, G Darkes, J Grant (substitute Panel member), E Huntington, I Jewell, M McKeon, J Makepeace, C Potts, A Reed, G Richardson, M Simmons and C Wilson

Co-opted Members:

M Baister, W Taylor

Also in attendance:

Kelsey Clayton (Legal Manager, Children and Adult Services),
Helen Fergusson (Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers),
Glenda Henderson (Placement Efficiency Manager),
Clive Horton (Deputy Head, Virtual School),
Selwyn Morgans (Manager, Aycliffe Secure Services),
Karen Robb (Strategic Manager, Looked After and Permanence),
Ellie Seed (Senior Project Worker, Children in Care Council),
Christine Stonehouse (Business Lead Inclusion, Standards and Attendance),
Jayne Watson (Senior Partnership Officer)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Bainbridge, A Savory, E Scott and H Smith.

2. Substitute Members

Councillor J Grant substituted for Councillor H Smith.

3. Minutes

With the addition of Cllr Reed's name to the list of apologies, and, the amendment of Marie Baister's job title to 'Designated Nurse, Safeguarding and Looked After Children', the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following updates were provided:

- Minute no. 4 – The Chair welcomed the newly appointed co-opted members, Marie Baister and Wendy Taylor to the meeting. The Senior Partnership Officer informed the Panel that work is ongoing to appoint the school representatives and an update on the development of the sub-groups will be brought to the next meeting.

- Minute no. 7 - A report on the Edge of Care service will be brought to the January Panel meeting.
- Minute no. 9 – In relation to the CiCC project to refurbish contact centres, Members Support will be contacted in order to ascertain if funding is available to contribute to this from members' individual budgets.
- Minute no. 10a - Three members have arranged to visit the MASH centre.
- Minute no. 10b – The information from the Westminster Briefing had been circulated to the Panel, for information.
- Minute no. 12 – A visit to Aycliffe Secure Centre has been arranged for 1 December. The Centre Manager, Selwyn Morgans, offered to make alternative arrangements for any members who were unable to attend the visit on 1 December. Those members wishing to make alternative arrangements were asked to liaise with the Senior Partnership Officer.
- Minute no. 13 – The new in-house Regulation 44 arrangements will be implemented from 1 April 2018. Members were informed that they would be contacted by the current provider, by email, during the week commencing 23 October to arrange Regulation 44 visits, and any members who did not receive an email were asked to inform the Senior Partnership Officer.
- Minute no. 14 – Cllr Brookes and Cllr Bennett will attend a meeting with Service Direct in November.
- Minute no. 16 - The feedback from the development session held at the September meeting will be circulated to members for information. The feedback from the session had been shared with the communications and marketing team.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

5. Number of Looked After Children

The number of looked after children was reported as 797.

6. Durham Virtual School for Looked After Children Annual Report - Progress and Achievement of Durham Looked After Children including those with Special Educational Needs

The Panel considered a report and presentation delivered by Clive Horton, Deputy Head of the Virtual School, which provided an overview of the Virtual School, including the role of the Virtual Head and the SEND needs of looked after children (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

Councillor Darkes referred to the percentage of looked after children achieving English and Maths GCSE and observed the figure for 2017 was lower than that for 2016. The Deputy Head of the Virtual School replied that the 2016 cohort had been a small and very able group.

The Chair commented that it would be useful to have data as to how Durham's looked after children compare with looked after children regionally and nationally.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation of the Deputy Head of the Virtual School be received.

7. Placement Efficiency Plan 2017/18 Update

The Panel considered a report and presentation delivered by Glenda Henderson, Placement Efficiency Manager, which provided an overview of the Placement Efficiency Plan. The Efficiency Plan for 2017/18 was circulated at the meeting (for copy of report, presentation and Efficiency Plan see file of minutes).

Councillor Makepeace asked how external costs would be reduced. The Placement Efficiency Manager replied that there is to be a review in 2018 which will include the renegotiation of the regional framework and the development of the external market provision. The Placement Efficiency Manager stressed the importance of working collaboratively with external providers.

Councillor Grant referred to edge of care services commenting that services of this nature had been offered by establishments in previous years however those establishments had closed. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence replied that, due to the increase in the number of looked after children, it had been necessary to widen the offer in order to provide more intensive support to families.

Resolved:

- That the contents of the report be noted;
- That the Efficiency Plan and presentation be received;
- That the effectiveness of the Efficiency Plan would continue to be monitored throughout the year.

The Chair welcomed Councillor O Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, to the meeting.

8. Children in Care Council Update

Ellie Seed, Senior Project Worker, Investing in Children, provided an update on the activities of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) as follows:

- Plans are in place for the meeting with corporate parents, facilitated by the young people of the CiCC at the Methodist Church, North Road, Durham on Tuesday 24 October from 5.30–7.30pm. All Panel members were welcome to attend the meeting and join in with the discussions and activities.
- Three young people had been involved in a Regional CiCC conference with the topic being 'Life in Care for Young People'.
- Two young people had taken part in a 'mystery shopping' exercise and the feedback from this would be shared with the Panel.

- One of the young people involved in the project to refurbish the contact centre at Stanley had asked if she could include suggestions made by service users for future projects. In light of this, service users were being contacted to ask for their input and costings were being sought. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers will provide information to the CiCC on the number of contact centres and their locations throughout the county.
- Work was continuing with the younger children and a soft-play event will be held in Consett on 14 November.
- The CiCC are working with the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a piece of work on a child's perspective of a Social Worker.

9. CiCC Meeting

The Chair encouraged Panel members to attend the CiCC meeting on Tuesday 24 October at the Methodist Church, North Road, Durham at 5.30 pm.

At the request of the Chair, the development item on pupil premium plus was considered as the next item of business.

10. Pupil Premium Plus Monies

The Deputy Head of the Virtual School delivered a presentation on pupil premium plus (for copy see file of minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Carr as to whether pupils from other Authorities who are placed in County Durham schools are allocated the same amount of funding as County Durham pupils, the Deputy Head of the Virtual School advised that the amount allocated by other Authorities varies.

The Panel discussed whether there is sufficient information available to carers and special guardians regarding pupil premium plus. Councillor Gunn suggested that this issue could be raised by Councillors through their links with school governing bodies. The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the Deputy Head of the Virtual School to deliver a briefing session with governing bodies on this issue.

There then followed a short discussion session on the questions posed in the presentation and the comments were noted.

11. Exclusion of the public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Councillor O Gunn, Glenda Henderson, Ellie Seed and Chris Stonehouse left the meeting

12. Regulation 44 Visits Summary Report

The Panel considered the Regulation 44 Visits action plans for September 2017. The report outlined the recommendations and associated actions following each Regulation 44 visit (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the Regulation 44 action plans for September be received.

13. Responsive Repairs / Service Direct

The Chair reported no outstanding issues and informed the Panel that an update will be provided, following the meeting with Service Direct in November.